IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (previously amended) A curette including:

a detachable tip with a proximal mating end that includes a threaded section and an outwardly extending elongated section with one or more flattened sides;

a shaft with a proximal end and a distal mating end, the distal end including a threaded indent for receiving the proximal mating end of the tip, the indent being sized to contain epoxy that hardens around the elongated section of the proximal mating end of the tip when the proximal end of the tip and the distal end of the shaft mate; and

a handle with a distal end and a proximal end, the distal end being shaped to mate with the proximal end of the shaft.

2. (Original) The curette of claim 1 wherein the threads of the threaded sections of the tip and the shaft interlock when the proximal end of the tip and the distal end of the shaft mate.

3. (Original) The curette of claim 1 wherein

the distal end of the handle includes a threaded section and an outwardly extending elongated section with one or more flattened sides, and

the proximal end of the shaft includes a threaded indent that is shaped to receive the distal end of the handle, the indent being sized to contain epoxy that hardens around the elongated section of the distal end of the handle when the proximal end of the shaft and the distal end of the handle mate.

4. (Original) The curette of claim 2 wherein the tip has a distal end that is shaped for scraping.

5. (Original) The curette of claim 4 wherein the tip is coated with a durable coating from a proximal end to the threaded section.

6. (Original) The curette of claim 5 wherein the durable coating is titanium nitrate.

7. (Original) The curette of claim 4 wherein the distal end of the tip is shaped as one of a scoop or a ring.

8. (currently amended) A method for assembling a curette, the method including the steps of:

partially filling ~~with epoxy~~ a threaded indent in a distal end of a shaft with epoxy, the indent being shaped to receive a mating end of a tip;

inserting the mating end of the tip in the partially-filled indent and screwing the shaft and tip together to interlock threads on the mating end of the tip with the threads in the indent, with the epoxy hardening around an elongated outwardly extending section of the mating end of the tip; and

attaching a handle to a proximal end of the shaft.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the step of attaching the handle includes inserting the distal end of the handle into a shaped indent in the proximal end of the shaft.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the step of attaching the handle further includes partially filling the shaped indent in the proximal end of the shaft with epoxy, the epoxy surrounding an elongated outwardly extending portion of the distal end of the handle when the handle is attached to the shaft.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of attaching further includes screwing together threads on the distal end of the handle and threads in the indent in the proximal end of the shaft until the threads interlock.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~7~~8 further including a step of removing a worn or dulled tip by heating the proximal end of the tip and the distal end of the shaft until the epoxy softens and unscrewing the tip and shaft.

13. (Currently Amended) A curette with a replaceable tip including:

a tip with a proximal end that includes a threaded section and an outwardly extending elongated section with one or more flattened sides;

a shaft with a proximal end and a distal mating end, the distal end including a threaded indent for receiving the proximal end of the tip, the indent being sized to contain epoxy;

epoxy that hardens around the elongated section of the proximal end of the tip when the proximal end of the tip and the distal end of the shaft screw together to mate, the epoxy being softened to allow the threads of the tip and shaft to be unscrewed for tip replacement; and

a handle with a distal end and a proximal end, the distal end being shaped to mate with the proximal end of the shaft.

14. (Original) The curette of claim 13 wherein the threads of the threaded sections of the tip and the shaft interlock when the proximal end of the tip and the distal end of the shaft screw together to mate.

15. (Original) The curette of claim 13 wherein

the distal end of the handle includes a threaded section and an outwardly extending elongated section with one or more flattened sides, and

the proximal end of the shaft includes a threaded indent that is shaped to receive the distal end of the handle, the indent being sized to contain epoxy that hardens around the elongated section of the distal end of the handle when the proximal end of the shaft and the distal end of the handle mate.

16. (Original) The curette of claim 14 wherein the tip has a distal end that is shaped for scraping.

17. (Original) The curette of claim 16 wherein the tip is coated with a durable coating from a proximal end to the threaded section.

18. (previously amended) The curette of claim 17 wherein the coating is titanium nitrate.

19. (Original) The curette of claim 16 wherein the distal end of the tip is shaped as one of a scoop or a ring.

20. (previously added) A method for replacing a tip of a curette, the method including the steps of:

removing an attached tip by heating epoxy included in a threaded indent in a distal end of a shaft, the indent being sized to receive a threaded mating end of the tip, and unscrewing the tip from the indent;

partially filling the threaded indent in the distal end of the shaft with epoxy;

inserting the threaded mating end of a replacement tip in the partially-filled indent and screwing the shaft and tip together to interlock threads on the mating end of the replacement tip with the threads in the indent;

allowing the epoxy to harden around the mating end of the replacement tip, with one or more flattened sides of the replacement tip preventing relative rotation of the replacement tip; and

attaching a handle to a proximal end of the shaft.